Breite unendlich mannichfaltig. Die Färbung der Schuppen ist bei 46 Formen hornartig und durchscheinend, bei 1 Form ganz dunkel, bei 9 Formen am letzten Drittel schwarz, bei 10 Formen bis zur Mitte schwarz.

4) Von den untersuchten 254 Arten hatten 37 an der bezeichneten Stelle nur je eine Form, 53 je zwei, 56 je drei, 50 je vier, 58 je fünf verschiedene Schuppenformen. Von 34 Acidalien hatten 18, von 61 Cidarien 38, von 12 Boarmien 9 dieselben Formen; diejenigen Arten, welche von dem gemeinsamen Typus abweichen, lassen auch bezüglich ihres ganzen Habitus eine Trennung von der Gattung zu, und es scheint mir daher nicht unmöglich, daß die Form der Schuppen zur Systematik benutzt werden kann; eine Classification der Falter lediglich auf Grund der Schuppenformen ist aber ebenso unthunlich, wie nach meinem Dafürhalten jene auf Grund des Rippenverlaufes zu Trugschlüssen geführt hat und führen mußte, weil eben einzelne herausgegriffene Merkmale wohl Familien, aber nicht Gattungen trennen können; letztere erfordern die höchste Zahl von Unterscheidungsmerkmalen, während zur Charakteristik der Familie die geknöpften Fühler, zur Bezeichnung einer Art eine gebogene Querlinie — ja leider oft nur das Vorkommen in einem neu erforschten Lande — hinreicht.

München, den 16. October 1882.

A word of explanation.

In Herr Bergroth's account of the work „on Dytiscidae" (E. Z. 1883 p. 129 sqq.) there is a remark that induces me to offer to the entomological public a word of explanation. There is, as correctly stated by Bergroth, no allusion made in the work to the beautiful plates and descriptions of larvae of Dytiscidae (and other Coleoptera) published by Schiödte. The reason of this is, that my work is a purely systematic one, and is limited to a particular department of the biology of the Dytiscidae, and this department is distinct from that in which Schiödte is working so splendidly.

It is my opinion that classifications must be made, in the first place, to deal only with the structures of animals at the period of their greatest perfection in the individual. The life-history of the individual is a matter of extreme interest and importance; but the attempt to combine the embryological element with a classification based on the highest development attained by the species is a futile one, and can only increase the difficulty of seeing even a little way into the excessively complex problems of modern biology. A systematic classification is a very complex series of generalisations based on the structure at which each species has arrived at the present time: but embryology — of which branch of science the knowledge of the metamorphoses of insects is certainly a department — is on the other hand an account of the roads by which the structures classified have been reached. It thus forms a department of knowledge of a kind quite distinct from what I have attempted to deal with in the work kindly described by Herr Bergroth. A comparative study of the results arrived at by the two departments separately will be, after each has been more perfect, a matter of extreme interest.

But I shall not pursue this question farther, for I make this explanation in order to make known the reason of my silence about Schiödte's work on metamorphoses. I regret however that I did not mention its existence in my introductory remarks; for I would not have appeared to be wanting in appreciation of this splendid production of the illustrious Professor at Copenhagen. In a natural history, or biology, of the Dytiscidae Schiödte's work will occupy an important place. but, as I have already said, my memoir does not profess to be a biology, and I have indeed expressly defined and limited its scope in the following words at the commencement of the memoir: „the memoir I offer to the Society is a mere imperfect sketch of the characters of the species of aquatic carnivorous beetles, and a contribution to a synthetical or natural classification thereof based on the external structures of the perfect insects."

Thornhill. Nov. 1882.

D. Sharp.
